

## Mint officials say U.S. wants more coins

By Roger Boye

**U**nkle Sam believes the demand for "hard money" will jump next year despite the increasing use of "debit cards" and other types of electronic currency.

U.S. Mint officials want to produce about 15 billion coins in fis-

cal 1994, up 20 percent from the 12.5 billion slated to be made this year. As in the past, Lincoln cents will account for nearly three out of every four new coins in 1994.

Coinage demand is affected by the overall population level, economic activity, inflation rate and the use of various types of money

cards, among other things. "Debit cards" allow consumers to pay for small purchases—such as pay-telephone calls—by having the cost deducted electronically from a credit balance stored on the card.

U.S. coin production peaked between 1982 and 1984, with a record 19.5 billion pieces minted in 1982 as officials attempted to relieve a shortage of Lincoln cents.

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The nation's largest organization of coin collectors is joining two computer networks in an attempt to propel the "king of hobbies" into the 21st Century.

Later this summer, users of the CompuServe and Prodigy computer bulletin boards will be able to communicate with the American Numismatic Association headquarters in Colorado Springs, providing on-line access to the ANA library and hobby experts. The two networks have about three million subscribers.

Edward C. Rocheite, whose two-year term as ANA president ends in late July, said the computer linkage might go down as the biggest achievement of his administration.

"The possibilities offered are limited only to the extent of one's imagination," he wrote in *The Numismatist*. "Collectors will find their questions promptly answered."

Meanwhile, the ANA is asking its 30,000 members if they want to impose term limits on the association's board of governors. At present, an ANA governor can serve for four consecutive two-year terms, and then can run again after remaining off the board for one term.